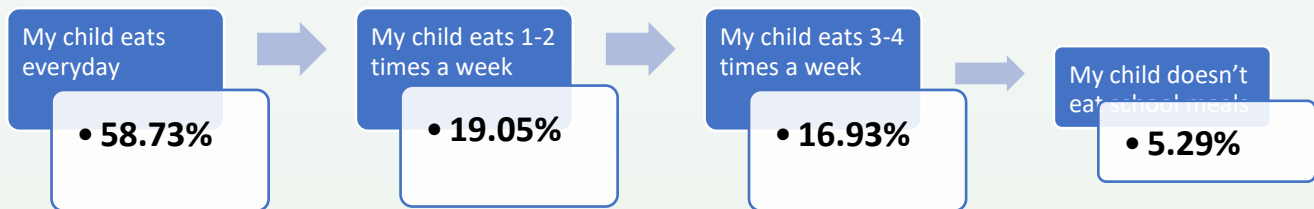


Happy New Year

Dear parent, guardian

Welcome to our monthly newsletter, where we can share information with you from across our business here in Reading. We are pleased to be able to share some of our recent survey results below with you...

We asked you **how many times your child eats a school meal**



We asked **what you felt was the most important reason when choosing a school meal** and the top 3 reasons were:

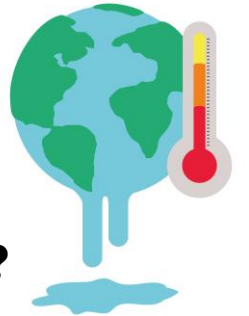
- * **Dietary Requirement** - please speak to your school if you have any dietary needs (please note we will need medical evidence from a NHS professional in order to issue medical diet)
- * **Food Provenance, Sustainability and Carbon Footprint** - we have introduced the new carbon footprint logo onto menus, this indicated the most environmentally friendly dishes on the menu - please also find attached Caterlink sustainability fact sheet
- * **Whether your child has an evening meal** – All reception and year 1 & 2 children eat for free, we provide healthy nutritious meals, freshly prepared onsite, every meal contains protein, carbohydrates, 2 portion of vegetables, a choice of salad daily, freshly baked bread and a freshly made dessert. All our meals adhere to the School Food Standards ensuring your child will get a well-balanced nutritious meal

If your child doesn't eat school meals, what could we do to change that – you told us it was the range of food options available, at Caterlink we strive to offer a balance of traditional, cultural and firm favourites plus new dishes, we recently moved away from Jacket Potatoes available daily to Pasta and sauce on offer twice a week, however this has been received with mixed reviews.
We always welcome feedback.

Overall only 16% of all our customers said they were not 100% satisfied with our school meals - we will continue to work to reduce this even further.

If you would like to work as part of a GREAT team here in Reading, we offer school hours, term time, full training, uniform including safety shoes and employee benefits, all our vacancies are advertised on our website www.caterlinkltd.co.uk under careers (search READING)

Background Information - Sustainable Food



What is a carbon footprint and CO₂e?

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases that are released into the atmosphere because of human activities. There are several greenhouse gases (e.g., carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide etc), so the simplest way to express it is as 'Carbon Dioxide Equivalents' (CO₂e). This enables different products to be easily compared against each other. The higher the CO₂e, the more greenhouse gases are released i.e., the greater the carbon footprint.

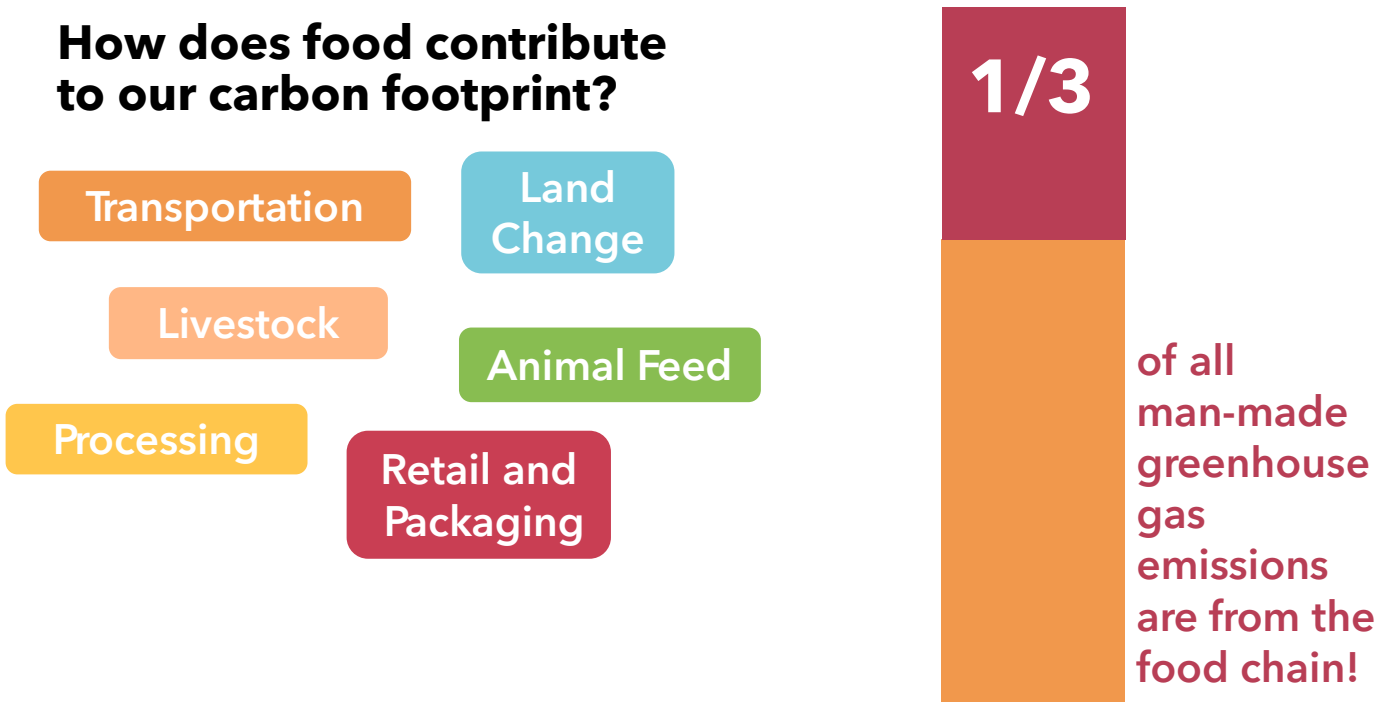


Why is our carbon footprint important?

When greenhouse gases accumulate in our atmosphere, they warm the planet resulting in climate change. Rising sea levels, melting glaciers and more frequent extreme weather like storms, flooding and heatwaves ruin nature and our own livelihoods.



How does food contribute to our carbon footprint?



What can we do?

We can slow the rate of climate change by making small changes to our diet. Plant-based proteins have a significantly lower carbon Footprint than meat or dairy, so, reducing meat consumption is the first point of call.



Caterlink Primary Schools

Sustainable Food - Carbon Footprint

Since 2016, we have undertaken numerous initiatives to lower the carbon footprint we generate from our menus, such as:

- Consistently implementing Meat Free Mondays
- Introducing more vegan dishes
- Starting our 'Added Plant Power' project

We have used the TUCO greenhouse gas calculator to calculate the average daily carbon footprint produced from our recipes:

All of our carbon reduction initiatives combined have saved a huge amount of carbon emissions over the past year*, equivalent to...



The amount of carbon sequestered by 7,000 ACRES of forest in a year

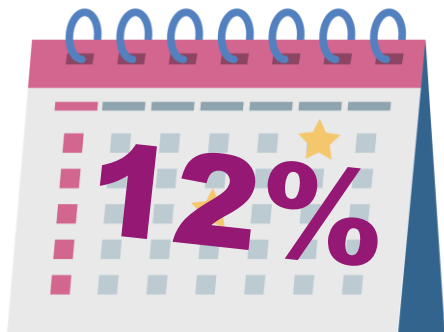
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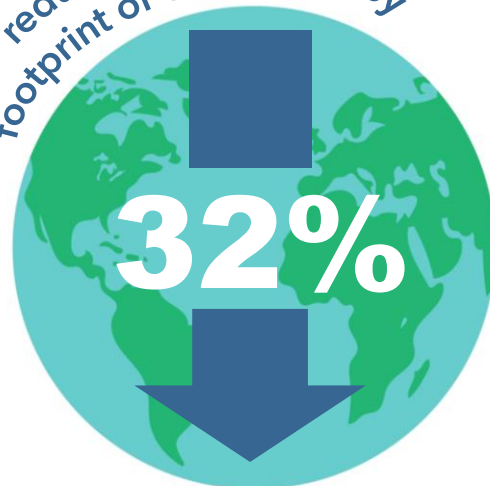
Almost 1,500 HOMES using electricity for a year!

*Based on 2023/2024 meal numbers of 33m meals; 70% choosing meat option, 10% choosing vegetarian option, 20% choosing jacket potato

In the past 12 months, we have reduced the carbon footprint of our menus by



Since 2016 we have reduced the carbon footprint of our menus by



What we purchase is important - we champion our local food producers and purchase foods with high standards of animal welfare, which is known to have a better environmental impact.



Caterlink Primary Schools

Sustainable Food - Added Plant Power



Each **Added Plant Power** dish produces **48% less greenhouse gas emissions**

In 2019 we introduced our range of **Added Plant Power** dishes - these are meat dishes where 50% of the protein content comes from plant-based proteins such as lentils, chickpeas or beans. Each recipe still has the required amount of protein as per the School Food Standards.

By introducing our Added Plant Power dishes, it means we have produced a lot less CO₂e over the past four years. This is equivalent to...



128,000 tree seedlings grown for 10 years

Almost 3 wind turbines running for a year!



715 million smartphones charged

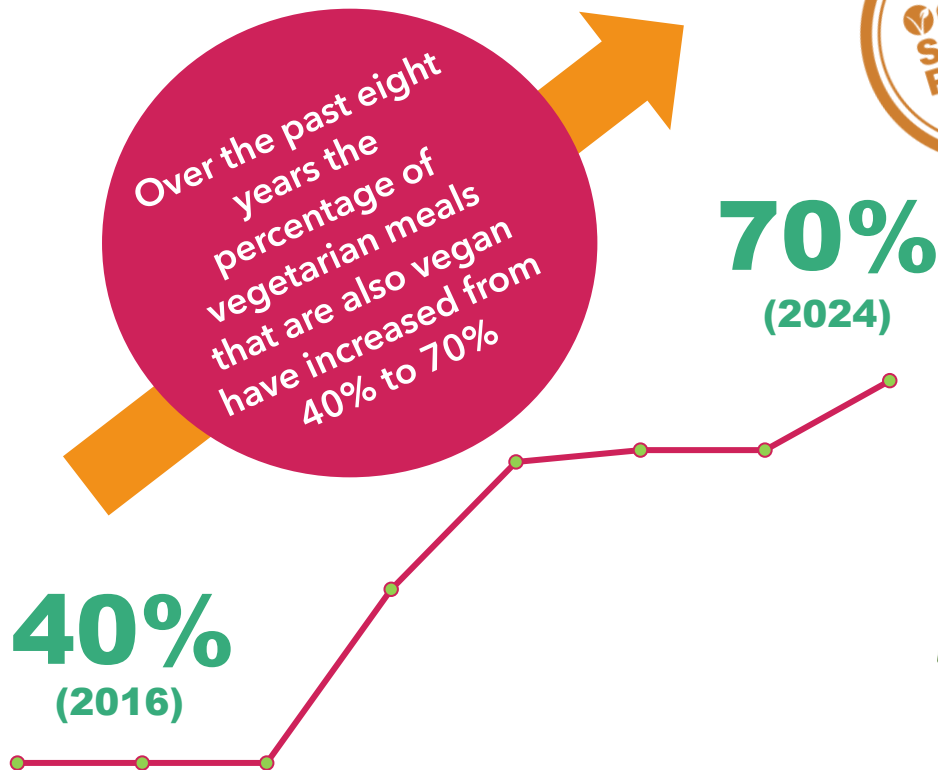
Plant based proteins are also good for our health - compared to our original recipes our **Added Plant Power** Recipes are:

- **49% lower in saturated fat**
- **50% higher in fibre**
- **52% lower in total fat**



Caterlink Primary Schools Sustainable Food – Vegan Dishes

Many people are making a conscious effort to include more plant-based options in their diets. Over the past few years, we have increased the number of plant-based options on our standard menus. We provide a full vegan menu to any child that requests one, however, we think it is important to offer a range of vegan options on our standard menus to expose children to a range of foods and offer variety. Whilst eating meat and dairy provides important nutrients, incorporating vegan meals into your diet can offer significant environmental and health benefits.



We have partnered with ProVeg UK on their School Plates Programme. This programme aims to make school food healthier and more sustainable by increasing and promoting plant-based content on school menus.

We have had great success so far with 105 schools in Camden and Islington enhancing their menus with more plant-based dishes and content and achieving a Bronze Award. We are also in discussions with 325 further schools to join the programme in 2025.



We have compared Caterlink's top five vegetarian dishes that contain milk, cheese or egg, to our top five vegan dishes. We have found that the vegan dishes are:

